



Mayor William R. Bailey III
State of the City Address

Riverside, California
January 23, 2014

We Are Better Together

Now that truly is the Riverside Way! Thank you all for that warm Riverside welcome and thank you for joining me here today in this stately Soldier's Memorial, especially all you students in the balcony. It doesn't get any better than being mayor of your hometown! I am honored to be back in front of you once again by demand of the city charter and by invitation of the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce. Thank you, Cindy Roth, Judy Carpenter and the entire chamber team for putting this event together and for your authentic partnership with the Mayor's Office.

As the spokesperson for our city, it is my hope that this speech will act as a lens, providing you with insight into City decision-making and the perspective of your mayor.

When I came before you last year for my first State of the City address, I shared with you my hopes for Riverside in 2013. What I didn't expect was that tragedy sometimes strikes amid hope.

In the first part of 2013, our community suffered a terrible loss as a result of a tragic act of violence. And we grieved together. Please join me in paying tribute to fallen Officer Michael Crain and recognizing his loving widow, Regina, and thanking Officer Andy Tachias and their families for their service and sacrifice to our grateful city.

But our city is nothing if not strong, resilient and forward-thinking. In 2013, together, we saved something very near and dear to us. Thank you Totally Mount Rubidoux for organizing the effort to ensure our historic cross remains standing like a beacon of hope and strength over our blessed city.

I can say to you with confidence that my hopes for 2013 were realized: Riverside Seized Its Destiny. You all responded to last year's challenges, and seized your destiny as a city that honors and builds on its assets to become a location of choice, one that catalyzes innovation in all forms, enjoys a high quality of life and is unified in pursuing the common good.

The Riverside Team responded with efficiency and professionalism to more than 200,000 calls for service, opened the new downtown fire station, completed another grade separation and increased our commitment to veterans and their families at Camp Anza. Our community came together to unveil the statue honoring Cesar Chavez on the Main Street Mall, to bring a network television show – "Splash" – to the new Riverside Aquatics Complex and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington. Our elected officials on the state level –

Senator Roth and Assembly members Medina and Linder – carried the football into the endzone with the UC Riverside School of Medicine. And we are poised for even better times ahead with the opening of the newly-renovated Riverside Convention Center. I can't wait for the community to get a look inside this landmark building that will attract visitors – and their wallets – to our city. And so I begin this State of the City Address where I left off last year -- We really, are better, TOGETHER, in Riverside.

Over the last year, I have been asked by everyone from international students to national media - What is Riverside's competitive advantage? My answer is consistent -- our educational institutions, our public utility, our historic downtown and our community spirit. Yes, we are competing, and, yes, we are winning! I hope you agree, there has never been a better time to live and do business in Riverside.

Our residents are represented well and have pride in our city. I know this because I have spent time with every council member in their ward.

Our employees work diligently, and have pride in their service. I know this because I have ridden along and visited with many of our city departments, divisions, and offices.

Our economy is growing, and our commerce is dynamic. I know this because I have visited dozens of businesses across the city.

Our teachers are highly competent, and our students are engaged. I know this because I have visited 31 different public, private and parochial schools.

Our communities of faith trust and support what we are doing and where we are going as a city. I know this because I have visited 20 diverse places of worship.

Our city is a player on the national stage. I know this because I have travelled to Washington DC and Philadelphia to represent Riverside at the National League of Cities and on the Mayor's Task Force for Education Reform.

Our neighbors are more engaged, and our neighborhood organizations are more active than ever. I know this because I have walked, biked, read, spoken with, and listened to more than 30,000 residents in all 26 neighborhoods.

Our city is the capital of Inland Southern California, and others look to us for leadership and best practices. I know this because I have reached out to Mayors, Supervisors and other representatives of our region. Together, we must support March Air Base, the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Corona and Ontario International Airport.

In the coming weeks, your city's leadership team will convene a policy workshop – something we haven't committed to in more than 8 years. We will use the city's charter and mission statement to prioritize the strategic vision, policy goals and values and provide clear direction to the city manager, city attorney, city clerk and their staff. This effort will help us govern more effectively on your behalf. We are better together when we are all on the same page.

On behalf of the city council, thank you to our spouses for enduring the time away and the stress involved in serving our city. To my wife, Judy, thanks for supporting me and for being such a great mom to our beautiful girls, Elizabeth and Julia. Let me also pause for a moment to thank an old friend who left us this year. During his 104 years on this Earth, he was my grandfather's treasured friend, my father's inspiration and my role model. His impact on our city will last for generations. Thank you, Justice John Gabbert.

Thank you to the City Council for your leadership and foresight in maintaining a healthy reserve fund, sustaining such a high quality of life through bruising economic times and for your commitment to ensuring a bright future for our great city and its residents.

Thanks to my staff in the Mayor' Office for assisting me through a fast-paced first year; you all have come together as a team and developed quality relationships in service to our city. Welcome to the Mayor's staff, Phil Pitchford, Riverside's new Intergovernmental and Communications Officer. Your title comes with high expectations for providing transparency, access and connections to important partners outside of City Hall.

Nancy Hart -- now retired from her elected public service as a school board member and city representative for more than 20 years -- thank you for always reminding me that family must come first as a priority in life.

Ken Gutierrez, thanks for a job well done; you are a good and faithful public servant for coming out of retirement and being more than just a steward as the appointed councilman representing Ward 3.

I look forward to continuing to develop my relationships with new Council members Jim Perry and Mike Soubirous. You bring a fresh perspective to the council. Also deserving our applause are former RPU General Manager Dave Wright and former Fire Chief Steve Earley. Both contributed incredible amounts of time, energy and service to this organization. Welcome to Team Riverside, Girish Balachandran, Lea Deesing and Sarah Mundy. I'm sure you know the high expectations we have of our leaders in this city, and that's why you answered the call to join the most responsive and responsible local government in California.

I believe everything rises and falls on leadership. So let me say "no pressure" to our newest generation of leaders -- Chancellor Wilcox, Interim Chancellor Azari, Superintendent Salazar, Interim Superintendent Fine and the newest member of the RUSD Board, Brent Lee -- you all already know the Riverside Way. President Ellis of California Baptist University knows about leadership, having been selected to the NCAA Division II President's Council. And thanks to President Wisbey, for your wise leadership at La Sierra University, which was named to the President of the United States', Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. I appreciate your continued commitment to collaborating around the Education Roundtable

To the city manager and city staff: thank you, Scott Barber for your professionalism, integrity and ethics. As our City Manager, you set the tone for how business is conducted at City Hall and beyond.

Belinda Graham – Thank you for successfully negotiating the city’s agreement with Live Nation, to operate the Fox Performing Arts Center and this auditorium.

Deanna Lorson – Thank you for leading an economic development team that helped create more than 4,500 jobs in two fiscal years. Now that is something to brag about.

Greg Priamos -- Your commitment to the Neighborhood Livability Program, has made it a best practice in the state and congratulations on being named Chair of the City Attorneys Department for the League of California Cities.

To the City Clerk -- Colleen Nicol, who continues to connect government to constituents, through e-comment and online resources, increasing transparency and accountability.

The gratitude of future generations goes to the voters in Riverside, who said Yes to Measure A, which allows Riverside residents to continue receiving an economic benefit from our locally-owned utility. And thanks to the Raincross Group, which advocated in favor of Measure A and helped inform the public of its benefits.

One final thank you, this one to the Champions of the Seizing Our Destiny movement -- past, present and future. You have embraced the mission to create a prosperous future in Riverside. Together, we will creatively tackle local issues, implement innovative solutions and promote Riverside success stories. We will ensure that Riverside remains a place that is attractive to diverse and dynamic families, businesses, students and visitors alike.

With this solid foundation in place, here’s what I see happening in our future.

Sustainability has become a way to measure success for a city. Through Riverside Public Utilities, we have set the example for others to follow in terms of sustainability and “going green.” This year, we will take this commitment to an even higher level.

Let me share my excitement for the first ever Grow Riverside: Citrus and Beyond Conference, March 19-20, at the Riverside Convention Center. This will inspire our city to reconnect to its agricultural roots and galvanize stakeholders toward the economic opportunities from employing sustainable farming in underutilized spaces. We can re-green the Green Belt in Riverside.

Now imagine a single project that could dramatically improve the quality of life across our community – increased property values, fewer car trips, better air quality, a more walkable community, more disposable income and more public transit choices. I’m speaking, of course, about the feasibility study to examine how a network of streetcars could impact Riverside. We earned a quarter-million-dollar grant to determine how a streetcar network could link Riversiders – including students, seniors and visitors -- to our historic downtown, universities and shopping centers and encourage increased economic development and investment along major corridors.

The question is not WHETHER Riverside will grow, but HOW Riverside will grow. More than 200,000 individuals live, attend college or work within a 10-minute walk to University and Magnolia Avenues – that’s two-thirds of our city! We can provide a way of life that keeps and

attracts young people yearning for the truly urban experience that is available nowhere else in the Inland region. Thank you to Siemens for bringing a streetcar, like the ones they have in Sacramento and San Diego, to University Avenue so that 2,500 Riverside residents could see and touch this technology.

As intended, the Riverside Renaissance capital improvement program has encouraged private investment on top of the public works infrastructure and quality of life improvements made in the last six years. From new restaurants and shops at the Galleria, to a makeover at the Riverside Plaza and the new dining establishments downtown -- developers know that Riverside deserves their best effort.

The Riverside Smart Code is an innovative planning tool that will help us find the highest and best use of our commercial, industrial and office lands, as well as the old Riverside golf course property. This approach will turn economic potential into economic power in our city. The Smart Code Specific Plan recognizes that, for investors and developers, time is money. This streamlining of the process brings projects to market more efficiently – and profitably.

We know about construction in Riverside – we drive through it every day. Shoot, I rode through some on the way over here. While we tolerate the massive construction projects hammering and digging throughout the city, we all know it will be sweet when they are complete. The 91 Freeway project dramatically improves the sight lines through the center of the city. Three grade separations will provide better traffic flow and less environmental impact from the trains that roll, from the ports, through our city every day -- especially for those who live, work or go to school next to the crossings. In a couple of years, Riverside will have completed 6 grade separations in 6 years -- more than any other city in California in that amount of time, ever! We can also look forward to major progress on Quiet Zones in 2014, along the BNSF rail line. Thanks to the Riverside County Transportation Commission and Caltrans for their efforts in and around Riverside, on so many levels.

One of the things that makes Riverside an exciting place is the insistence that good is not good enough and that all of us are responsible for creating that next wave of progress. Your city government is doing its part to realize the goals of Seizing our Destiny by catalyzing innovation and partnering with those who want to change the way we do business in this city. We are making progress with tools like E-Plan Review, which allows you to move your project through the development process not at our planning counter, but at your computer.

On January 7, the City Council voted to bring high-speed fiber optic access to Riverside ExCITE, the newest addition to our City's high-tech and entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through ExCITE, we will bring entrepreneurs in the med-tech and biotech fields which need to manage and transfer data at speeds 100 times faster than is now possible.

Riverside ExCITE adds to an environment that has incubated a dozen promising companies, any of which could become the next Bourns Inc. -- just ask Cindy the story about how the Chamber and the City partnered to bring the Bourns family to Riverside more than 50 years ago. I know that investment returned more than we expected – and that is what incubators can do. They prove that we are better, together, in Riverside.

The private sector doesn't have a monopoly on innovation. Riverside continues to win praise from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the National League of Cities for the tremendous success of Completion Counts. All the partners have renewed their commitment to our goals of raising high school and college graduation rates in Riverside.

Postsecondary educational attainment is required for up to 93% of jobs in today's economy.

Completion Counts is a tangible economic development advantage for Riverside. The ongoing success of this initiative matters to all of us, for we are better together, when we are educated.

The way I see it, innovation is part of our history and our culture. The Riverside Auto Center, the first auto mall in the country, is nearing its 50th anniversary and deserves to have a community celebration. By the way, now visible from space is the auto center sign. I heard that Dutton sold a Cadillac to an astronaut. Seriously! Thank you, dealers, for choosing to stay in Riverside, and for selling our city, along with your automobiles.

One of the ways we instill a commitment to innovation in our young people is through the Long Night of Arts and Innovation, which brings our education partners together, to display the exciting ways in which our educational institutions are embracing the worlds of STEM and the arts. We will continue to showcase Riverside as a powerhouse of arts and innovation through the Long Night, the STEP Conference, and other events like them.

People have choices about where they live and where they locate their business. This competition for the next wave of residents and job creators bodes well for Riverside. We offer something for everybody here.

Riverside is a city of 26 distinct neighborhoods where one person can enjoy a barbecue in a traditional suburban cul de sac while another person can walk out the back door, saddle up a horse and ride through the river bottom. It's a place where one person can walk a few blocks to enjoy world-class entertainment at a world-class venue like the Fox Performing Arts Center, while another person can pick the juicy sweet citrus from a backyard grove, much like our forefathers did a century ago. It's also a place where seniors can find affordable housing and an active lifestyle.

Many see Riverside as a destination city, dating back to when it was an oasis for Hollywood stars and starlets. Our own Festival of Lights shone brightly again in 2013, having been named one of the Top 5 holiday festivals in the nation. I envision growing a similar level of excitement for a New Year's Eve celebration that wraps up the holidays the same way the Festival of Lights kicks them off. The Riverside Artswalk, on the first Thursday of every month, brings thousands of people downtown to enjoy music, art and entertainment. The Riverside Art Museum's relationship with Baby Tattooville brings 40 artists from around the world to the Mission Inn, along with a \$100,000 economic impact. Cosme Cordova's Day of the Dead celebration, now in its 10th year, attracts as many as 10,000 people – that's a big time event! And it helps us celebrate our culture while remembering those we have lost.

This year Riverside is the destination of choice for 18 major athletic events, including the AYSO National Games, the Pan American Synchronized Swimming Championships and the Women's Water Polo World League Championships. These 18 events will fill more than 13,000 hotel

room nights and bring more than 80,000 visitors to Riverside in 2014. Tourism is in fact an emerging sector of our economy. Even our bike culture is attracting tourists who want to ride all year long. Look for that to grow even more in 2014 as construction begins on the final gaps in the “Crest to Coast” bicycle trail.

Speaking of athletics, I see and feel our city and county placing a major emphasis on health and fitness. Our Fit, Fresh and Fun Forum connects local businesses, non-profits and universities with neighborhoods to create long-term systemic change through collaboration and education. The City's Employee Workplace Wellness program and the Get Fit Challenge helped 330 employees shed 2,900 pounds last year. Now, with a \$2 million dollar grant from the County, the City will partner with the community and our two school districts to have a greater reach into Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Programs.

The re-opening of the convention center, coupled with Live Nation operating the Fox Theater and this Auditorium, provides us with a perfect opportunity to Tell Our Story to a national audience. Live Nation, the largest provider of entertainment in the world, sees our entertainment potential, and they want to be a part of it. They see the energy and continued momentum created by the 66 eateries, bars and nightclubs in downtown alone. We must take advantage of this momentum by encouraging downtown residential developments. It is time to accelerate this potential and seize our destiny as the entertainment and tourism capital of Inland Southern California. With more than 230,000 people living within five miles of City Hall, Riverside is at the tipping point to become a Southern California center of urban downtown living. Let's proudly and passionately tip it over together.

We must continue to invite our friends, family and business networks, to See Riverside and Shop Riverside. Greeting them will be the new “Riverside Tour Guide,” a mobile app developed in house by our Innovation and Technology Department. The Tour Guide brings the City of Riverside's heritage to life, for residents, visitors, teachers and students, in English and in Spanish. Phase one of this application focuses on the statues along the Main Street Mall.

One of the joys of being mayor, is seeing our diverse people come together, around a common goal that binds us closer as a unified city. The unveiling of the Cesar Chavez statue on the Main Street Mall this year was just such a moment. Thanks to Ofelia Valdez Yeager, the Latino Network and the team of planners and dreamers, architects and designers whose vision, dedication, perseverance and effort were realized in this beautiful monument to the civil rights leader and co-founder of the United Farm Workers. With more than 1,000 people at the unveiling, it was an historic day in Riverside.

Congratulations to the University Eastside Community Collaborative on your 20th anniversary. This organization builds bridges between UCR and the surrounding community. We are better together when we reach out to each other.

Thank you to Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful for continuing to provide the premier vehicle for volunteering in Riverside. At last count, your work had facilitated more than 24,000 hours of volunteer time in our city – nearly three years' worth of around-the-clock philanthropy!

Thank you to the many advocates of the Riverside branch library system. Your enthusiasm is a major reason why we have the best library system in the region.

I look forward to seeing the “26 in 26” program make a difference in our neighborhoods. This unique effort involves spending more than two years reaching out to each of the 26 neighborhoods in the city and developing local leaders, harnessing local resources and solving local problems. It’s a long-term effort led by the Riverside Neighborhood Partnership that will kick off in 2014.

We are blessed to have an abundance of non-profit organizations in Riverside, but like most communities, non-profits face funding challenges every year. Give BIG Riverside, in only its second year, demonstrated what this city is capable of when it mixes community spirit with a splash of technology. The Community Foundation is central to Give Big’s success through convening and organizing.

Community gardens are bringing people together across the city and into our parks and schools. Thank you to the Wood Streets Green Team and Pat Silvestri, for staying the course after a 200-year storm washed out the new garden at Ryan Bonaminio Park.

Our Human Relations Commission and the Mayor’s Multicultural Forum continue to support inclusiveness by recognizing everyday heroes and awarding scholarships to high school students who celebrate diversity in our city. The commitment to equity and fairness -- be it in housing, education, or employment -- is never over.

If that’s not evidence of a unified city, I don’t know what is!

Now it’s time for one of my favorite parts of the speech – the opportunity to challenge you, and the community, to look further, and focus deeper.

It is no secret that we compete in a global economy. Our future depends, in part, upon international companies, like SolarMax and Royal Interpack, growing in Riverside. If we are to make greater inroads into the global community, we need to infuse the spirit of globalism into all of our residents. And here is where the International Relations Council can help us. As you may know, my great aunt, Edna Bailey Lockhart, was one of the individuals who shaped the early years of the IRC through her successful efforts to connect Riverside with Sendai. In that same spirit, the IRC needs to re-build and strengthen its sister city committees, expand its membership and promote itself to the business community as a bridge to international investors and educational opportunities.

I challenge you to support the Harada House fundraising effort. Let’s seize this opportunity to tell our story in a unique way by purchasing the home next door to the Harada House for use as an interpretive center. Our Museum and Cultural Affairs folks have done great work here, but we need to raise \$15,000 by Jan. 31. If every person in this hall gave \$15 to this cause, our mission would be accomplished. Let’s seal the deal for the Harada House, here, tonight!

Imagine a vibrant “Innovation Corridor” that connects the Eastside School for the Arts with the art and music programs at UCR and the RCC Centennial Plaza breaking ground downtown this year, one that uses the City’s high-speed fiber infrastructure and vacant land to increase jobs and neighborhood investment. I challenge City staff to work with the council and the community to develop a strategy that brings Arts and Innovation to life, along University Avenue.

I challenge SmartRiverside, so successful in implementing our initial citywide wi-fi system and in bridging the digital divide, to develop a comprehensive digital and fiber optic policy that will attract and retain innovative high-tech, engineering and medical companies.

Finally, my challenge for all of us is to look through the Riverside LENS. Find opportunities to develop as LEADERS, for we are the decision makers who will impact future generations of Riversiders. We must all keep our eyes and ears open, for ways to foster and invest in local ENTREPRENEURS, for they will employ our residents and create new markets in our city. I encourage you to connect with your NEIGHBORS online or over the fence, the old-fashioned way, for they may come to your rescue someday. And find a STUDENT to mentor this year, for an educated society and a productive citizenry will help keep our city competitive.

Most of all, I leave you with this: Riverside has Given Big this last year. Riverside continues to Think Big, with Seizing Our Destiny as our strategic vision. And we must acknowledge, today, that we are Big – larger than St. Louis, Cincinnati or Pittsburgh. And we have earned the right to DREAM big! The recession is over. When other cities hunkered down and talked about the sky falling, Riverside had a Renaissance. We prepared for the next wave, and NOW it’s time to ride it. I am so proud to lead a city that is not afraid to take some risk and to celebrate the rewards with everyone. Diversity is a blessing, but we make a choice to be inclusive. And Riverside continues to prove that even as it grows and competes with cities across the globe, we remain a city that honors and builds on its past, while pursuing a future that raises the quality of life, for everyone. For we are better, together, in Riverside -- because of you!

May God bless you all, and may God bless our beloved Riverside.